

From: Sassaquin Pond Watershed Alliance

We applaud the City of New Bedford for the efforts to protect Sassaquin Pond with a proposed Stormwater Ordinance. We do however have some concerns as to how this first draft is currently written.

The Sassaquin Betterment Alliance would like some assurances that the City is behind us in making the changes and the infrastructure of the storm drain system, a step that will provide the most significant benefit to the pond. The pond was seriously compromised in the late 1980's when the City installed storm drains that diverted stormwater directly into Sassaquin Pond. In 1987, residents of the pond won a law suit in Supreme Court (#1934) against the City in which the city was deemed responsible for keeping the pond at level suitable for recreational use. Efforts of the City of New Bedford have fallen far short of this responsibility over the past 28 year.

We feel that this ordinance as proposed puts most of the burden on the homeowners in the watershed, and downplays the role of the City and DPI in solving this problem. The ordinance currently under review even goes so far as to suggest that work performed by the City of New Bedford be exempt from obtaining a Stormwater Permit. We strongly disagree with this exclusion.

We are also concerned that this ordinance has been drawn up before the report from the study conducted by scientists at UMASS Dartmouth (paid for by the City) is made available. The results are expected soon. We suggest that before any ordinance is finalized the results of the study be made available and the recommendation of UMASS Dartmouth's scientists be sought out.

Additionally, we believe this ordinance should address the use of fertilizers, car washing, oil changing, pet waste, etc. and the City should provide additional staffing to assure the enforcement of these regulations.

We would also like to see a threshold set for the land disturbance. The current proposal suggests that any disturbance of land require a permit. We suggest a certain amount of disturbance be determined in order to require a permit and that small levels of land disturbance, such as gardens, not be regulated.

Consideration should also be given to a grandfathering clause for facilities or structures that do not meet the standards of the Ordinance as proposed.

We ask that you work closely with the Sassaquin Betterment Alliance as your partner in the final development of a Stormwater Ordinance for the City of New Bedford.

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APR 21 2015
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